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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Friday November 27, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Listeners, if you feel as I always do on the day after Thanksgiving, you won't want to hear or think about food. So I am departing from the usual Friday schedule and not mentioning the Market Basket. Instead, I'm bringing up the Christmas List for your attention. With holidays chasing each other at the pace they do at this time of year, it is already high time to polish off that list and finish your shopping.

If you happen to have silk stockings on your list this year -- stockings for mother, sister, cousin or aunt, you may welcome buying tips from the Bureau of Home Economics.

But don't misunderstand me. Far be it from me to presume to give hints to Santa Claus on a subject like Christmas stockings. If anyone should know hose, he should -- with centuries of experience behind him. But just in case the most recent news about silk stockings hasn't reached the North Pole, perhaps you Christmas shoppers would like a few tips to guide you through the maze of the stocking counter. This counter can usually put the smartest shopper in a state of bewilderment and confusion with so many prices, names, colors, weights and what not to choose from and no standards or quality labels as guides. Some day the Christmas shopper will have such labels. I hear that the hosiery manufacturers are already working on them. But this year the best you can do is to inform yourself as best you can on matters like weight, size, and reinforcements of heel, toe and top, and buy accordingly.

Because weight has so much to do with wear in silk hose, you'll probably make a more satisfactory gift if you consider weight before you buy. In general, hose sell in 3 different weights, called "Sheer", "Semi-Service", and "Service". The number of single threads that go to make up each yarn in the stocking determines the weight.

Stockings called "Sheer" or "Chiffon" range from 1-thread to about 3-thread. They are the luxury or party stockings, made for looks rather than wear, and usually more expensive than the more serviceable weights. The most fragile stocking made is the 1-thread -- a pure luxury never guaranteed for even one wearing! But the 3-thread sheer in a high-gauge knit looks practically as sheer and gives much more wear. If the silk stockings down on your Christmas list are for a gay friend who goes to many parties, probably the "Sheer" weight is the best for her. And if you want her to wear your gift to as many parties as possible, buy a high-gauge 3-thread hose rather than a 1-thread.

Now for the second weight -- the so-called "Semi-Service" hose. Usually these stockings are 5- or 6-thread. The business girl will enjoy these for general wear. So will the housewife.

The heaviest most serviceable silk stockings naturally are called "Service" hose and they are for street, sports, and everyday. They range from 7- to 12-thread. Your friend who does a good deal of walking and wears sports clothes will enjoy these. And she'll wear them a long time.

So much for weight. Now a point or two about the weave -- or more properly the knit of the stocking. As I mentioned before, a high-gauge knit is a finer knit which looks better and wears better in a sheer hose than low-gauge. It gives a stocking more elasticity and that means longer wear and better fit. And it snags less easily -- which means fewer runs. Those dull-finish stockings that usually sell by the name of "Crepe" stockings also wear better and snag less because they have such tightly twisted threads.

As for size, to make a satisfactory gift, you'll want to check not only on the length of the foot but on the length of the leg. Stockings come in 4 leg-lengths -- Short--28 to 29 inches long; Medium--30 to 31 inches; Long--33 to 34 inches; and Extra Long--36 to 37 inches. If your friend is a tall girl with long legs, she'll welcome a long stocking. If she is short, she will be glad to have hose short enough so that she won't have to fasten the garter in the stocking itself and thus start a run.

The stocking manufacturers have also given thought to the needs of the plump ladies and the very thin ones. Stockings called "Outsize" are large from the ankle up. Elastic tops are another help for the plump. And so are stockings that have 2-way stretch tops. Very thin women usually find the best fit in so-called "Misses" hose.

As for foot-size, that goes by the number of inches in the length of the foot. A stocking with a foot 9 inches long is a Number 9. And so on. For the average woman, the stocking should measure half an inch longer than the foot. But a fat foot may need more space in the stocking and a thin one less.

What about buying these attractive Christmas packages of hose all wrapped and sealed in transparent paper? This wrapping has both advantages and disadvantages. Stockings packaged this way are protected from damage in the shop. But you can't examine them before buying. For example, you can't hold them up to the light to see if they have streaks, or rings, or imperfect places.

Another important consideration in buying Christmas stockings is the reinforcement at the top or at the heel or toe, because the life of the stocking may depend on it. If the reinforcement is either too light or too heavy it may cause holes. For service hose, wide, high and heavy reinforcements are best. For fragile chiffon hose to be worn with dancing slippers and sandals, smaller and less heavy reinforcements look best. Some sheer hose have "shadow" reinforcements -- those that gradually taper off in weight so that they cause less pull on the sheer stocking.

Reinforcements are of silk or cotton or silk outside and cotton underneath, called "plated". Silk heels look well and give reasonable wear. Plated reinforcements are durable but often streak and may even fade.

That finishes all the tips I have collected on stockings from Santa.

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